

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 25, 2023

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chair
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Rogers and Ranking Member Smith,

We write today concerning the urgent need to support the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) in their broad efforts to remain resilient to climate insecurity, domestically and abroad. Last Congress, the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition (SEEC)'s Climate and National Security Task Force championed several important provisions in the Fiscal Year 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (FY23 NDAA) that prioritized energy resilience and enviropysical risk management to holistically address climate change as a direct threat to U.S. national security. As you work to finalize the FY24 NDAA, we urge you to continue to support our men and women in uniform in building a robust national defense strategy that confronts the global climate crisis head on.

Protecting our military installations

We need to ensure our military bases and installations are secure and have the readiness levels needed. A 2018 DoD report¹ found that 50% of surveyed military bases worldwide reported effects from storm surge flooding, wildfire, and drought. Months after the report was published, Tyndall Air Force Base suffered catastrophic damage as Hurricane Michael struck the Florida Panhandle. Four years later, construction began to transform the base into a first-of-its-kind installation that has resilience to extreme weather at its center. By incorporating natural infrastructure, such as sand dunes and reefs, along with virtual reality technology to show building weaknesses, the lessons learned at Tyndall will serve as a blueprint for innovation and how the armed forces can scale up similar development at modest costs compared to the \$5 billion that will be spent on rebuilding Tyndall.

As you know, each armed forces branch has action plans that serve as a road map to help them better consider and prepare for the impacts of climate on its operations, training, installations, planning, and business processes when making decisions. We were pleased with DoD's efforts to identify bold steps that must be taken to accelerate adaptation to reduce the adverse impacts of climate change and would like to highlight a few goals in particular:

- Within the **Air Force and Space Force's [Climate Action Plan](#)**, the Services announced \$36 million in targeted investments to modernize bases around the world for FY23 with a further steady increase to \$100 million by FY27.

¹ Department of Defense Climate-Related Risk to DoD Infrastructure Initial Vulnerability Assessment Survey (SLVAS) Report – January 2018.

- Within the **Army's [Climate Strategy Implementation Plan](#)**, the Service calls for completing 20 microgrid projects by the end of FY27, which will assist bases in managing multiple energy sources and loads. These microgrids reduce energy costs by providing grid services to the regular utility provider, such as demand response and frequency regulation.
- Within the **Coast Guard's [Climate Framework](#)**, the Service highlighted a rise in 15 “Type 1” weather driven events between 2017-2021, compared with one in the ten years prior. More frequent extreme events necessitate an effective and accurate understanding of maritime activity with other federal agencies, including DoD, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), to better respond in the Arctic, Atlantic, and Pacific regions.
- Within the **Marine Corps and Navy's [Climate Action 2030](#) report**, the Services have recovered \$155 million based on its reduced energy consumption. For savings generated by installations, half of these funds are reinvested into energy conservation, energy resilience and similar programs, while the remaining 50% go back to the installations that generated the savings to fund projects such as morale, welfare and recreation facilities and services.

We request Directive Report Language on what steps the Department is taking to implement the objectives outlined within each plan, with annual updates on progress being made to meet their goals. In addition, we request Direct Report Language on progress for providing military bases with access to funding to adopt best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater management that was included in the FY22 NDAA.

We believe that the United States military can play a critical role in further developing breakthrough technology such as Direct Air Capture (DAC) and Blue Carbon Removal Technology Programs that can help the U.S. usher in new innovation. Since the passage of the FY20 NDAA, DoD and U.S. Department of Energy (DoE) have partnered together to research how carbon capture technology can be used to address energy security for the military and provide installations with military transport fuel. **We urge the committee to continue providing robust funding in this area.**

To support these programs that address environmental, resilience, installation energy, and water technology requirements, **we support robust authorization for the following programs:**

- **Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program (SERDP)**, focuses on cross-Service requirements and pursues solutions to the Department's most pressing environmental challenges.
- **Environmental Security Technology Certification Program (ESTCP)**, identifies the most promising innovative and cost-effective technologies and methods that address DoD's high priority environmental requirements.
- **Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP)**, addresses deficiencies in community infrastructure supportive of a military installation and its adjacent community.

We also request bill language that would amend 10 USC 2801 to provide clear authority for DoD to engage in military construction, minor military construction, military installation resilience,

energy resilience, and other similar projects necessary at overseas bases where U.S. forces have been "granted access" by foreign partners. This would ensure full operational capacity for U.S. forces at those "granted access" locations, including, for example, the base access sites recently added in the Philippines.

Maintaining an energy portfolio that is resilient and diverse

The performance of our military relies on a broad portfolio of resilient, efficient, and secure sources of energy. DoD spends billions of dollars each year on facility and operational energy to maintain the mission readiness needed to deploy and fight. Protecting a diverse and secure energy portfolio that can remain resilient to unpredicted disruptions - whether from a foreign adversary or extreme climate event - means that the military can remain operational at all times.

Firstly, DoD maintains well-established programs that work on energy resilience, assurance, and risk management. To support these programs that target the crucial power supply of our military, we support robust authorizations for the following programs:

- **Operational Energy Capability Improvement Fund**, improves operational effectiveness via targeted investments, aligned with DoD's Operational Energy Strategy.
- **Operational Energy Prototyping Fund**, validates more mature operational energy technologies in order to transition them to widespread use.
- **Army Office of Energy Initiatives**, develops, implements, and oversees the Army's large-scale energy projects focused on enhancing energy resilience on Army installations.
- **Air Force Office of Energy Assurance**, serves as an aggregator for installation energy and water resilience initiatives.
- **Energy Resilience and Conservation Investment Program**, constructs new, high-efficiency energy systems and technologies and modernizes existing systems to improve energy resilience, contribute to mission assurance, save energy, and reduce DoD's energy costs.

We recognize that energy storage is a critical piece in maintaining and enhancing the energy security and independence needs of our military installations. The U.S. military can take advantage of these historic investments that were signed into law last year and serve as an energy innovator and leader for communities – domestically and abroad – who are looking to achieve enhanced energy security and resilience solutions.

To support these functions, **we request that within the Annual Energy Management Report, the Department report on the inventory of existing battery systems (in excess of 1 MWh) and renewable energy generation (in excess of 1 MW) on DoD installations that can be used for energy resilience purposes.** Identifying and expanding the military's energy storage and renewable energy generation capabilities would ensure that we capture the full power of a diverse array of energy sources, particularly solar and wind resources, that can bolster the military's energy security.

Through bidirectional charging, electric vehicles can serve as energy resilient assets that essentially provide "energy storage on wheels" to support critical services and functionality during high energy demand or in natural disasters. **We request that you direct each of the**

military services to develop a concept of operations (CONOPS) for using government-owned battery-operated vehicles (in excess of 100 kWh) that would provide backup power to an installation. We request that this CONOPS is integrated into each Installation Energy & Water Plan.

Electric vehicles are expected to dominate just over half of the new vehicle market by 2030, and DoD must innovate along this technological transition by installing power and charging infrastructure on military installations. **We request authorized funding for charging stations and other electric vehicle infrastructure on military installations.** Further, the FY23 NDAA included a requirement for electric vehicle acquisition transition by 2035. **We similarly request a requirement for a percentage of medium- and heavy-duty non-tactical vehicles and equipment to be electric by 2035.**

Finally, in the effort to ensure energy diversification and supply chain resilience, the U.S. Air Force announced the goal of having two of its operational bases utilizing at least 10% of sustainable aviation fuel blends by the end of 2025. We would like to be **informed on the progress of the Sustainable Aviation Fuel pilot program that we secured funding for in FY23 and the next steps and support required to ensure longevity of this program.**

Sustainable aviation fuel not only addresses climate security by producing less carbon emissions than traditional petroleum-based fuels, but also supports the DoD's energy resilience by increasing the range of fuel sources for military aircraft.

Strengthening U.S. Competitiveness in the Indo-Pacific

The United States has a unique, strategic relationship with countries that make up the Compacts of Free Association (The Compacts): the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of Palau (Palau). The Compacts were districts of the former U.S. - administered United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, established after World War II, and later became independent nations. Under the Compact, the U.S. provides guaranteed financial assistance over a 15-year period – to be reauthorized by Congress pending expiration – administered through the Department of Interior via its Office of Insular Affairs and other federal agencies such as Department of State (DoS) and the DoD in exchange for operation of U.S. military bases in the Compacts and to make decisions related to external security.²

Specifically, the U.S. military operates the Ronald Reagan Ballistic Missile Defense Test Site at the U.S. Army Garrison-Kwajalein Atoll in the RMI. Additionally, the DoD is building a high-frequency radar system in Palau and is seeking to install U.S. Air Force Agile Combat Employment operations in the FSM.

The continuance of the current Compacts has been subject to increased international speculation due to the impending expiration of the Compact funding agreements for RMI and FSM in FY2023, and Palau in FY2024 – specifically pertaining to known Chinese territorial expansion efforts in the Pacific. The recent circulation of classified foreign intelligence documents in April 2023 only exacerbated these concerns when it became publicly known that the U.S. has recently detected high-altitude Chinese balloons over the Compacts.

² Lum, Thomas. The Compacts of Free Association – crsreports.congress.gov.

Given the economic and climate vulnerability of the Compacts, it is essential that the U.S. strengthens our partnership with the Compacts as part of our national strategy to compete with China. As such, we request support for the following programs:

- **Department of Defense Environmental International Cooperation (DORIC) Program**, to address the adverse effects of climate related disasters, strengthen sustainable energy interests, mission resilience, build partner capacity and strengthen relationships in the Compacts.
- **Humanitarian Assistance/ Disaster Relief (HA/DR) and Climate Resilience**, continued DoD support to provide immediate assistance following major natural disasters such as volcanic eruptions and subsequent tsunamis. Additionally, we request that the Secretary of Defense use excess supplies authorized in 10 U.S. Code § 2557 to provide civic humanitarian assistance for climate resilient projects that support flooding, drought, construction of renewable microgrids in the Compacts.
- **Support and Expand Maritime Law Enforcement in the Compacts**, Operation Junction Rain is an effective program aimed at building African nations' maritime security and law enforcement capability in identifying illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. We recommend that the DoD work with the U.S. Coast Guard to support and expand existing maritime law enforcement capability in the Compacts that enforce maritime awareness and support detection and tracking of illegal fishing.
- **Civic Action Program in Palau**, to conduct long and short-term engineering projects that promote resilient infrastructure and grid technology.

The climate crisis is one of the biggest non-state-actor threats to not only American citizens but the global community writ large. Secretaries of Defense from both parties have cited climate change's role on geopolitical events. In March 2017, Secretary of Defense James Mattis wrote, "Climate change is impacting stability in areas of the world where our troops are operating today. It is appropriate for the Combatant Commands to incorporate drivers of instability that impact the security environment in their areas into their planning." These sentiments were recently echoed by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark Milley who said, "Climate change is a threat. Climate change has a significant impact on military operations, and we have to take that into consideration."

Many of the priorities outlined in this letter were first introduced with bipartisan support because Democrats and Republicans understood the benefits they provided to our national security. They will help our military directly address this threat by remaining globally competitive through international coordination, enhanced resiliency of our military installations, and an expanded sustainable and secure energy portfolio. We strongly urge you to include the SEEC Climate and National Security Task Force's request in the FY24 NDAA. Thank you for your consideration.

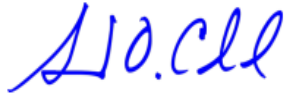
Sincerely,



Katie Porter
Co-Chair
SEEC Climate and National
Security Task Force



Andy Kim
Co-Chair
SEEC Climate and National
Security Task Force



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Ted Lieu
Member of Congress



Wiley Nickel
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Bradley S. Schneider
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Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress